



1450 Halyard Drive, Suite 6
West Sacramento, CA 95691
www.deltaconservancy.ca.gov

Delta Public Lands Strategy, Review and Consider Final Draft

Staff Report

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the Board review and consider the final draft of the Delta Public Lands Strategy. Consistent with Conservancy Policy, the Board is not being asked to approve the final draft to preserve the integrity of the yearlong, collaborative planning effort.

DESCRIPTION

Through 2018, the Delta Conservancy coordinated a public planning process to develop a high-level, integrated conservation strategy for publicly-funded lands in the west, central, and northeast Delta. This collaborative planning process brought together landowners, agencies, and interested stakeholders to develop a high-level strategy for connecting investments in habitat conservation, flood protection and levee improvement, land management, and recreation and tourism to maximize benefits to the Delta ecosystem, regional economy, and water quality. This project was initially called the Central Delta Corridor Partnership.

The planning process included two public workshops, one at the beginning of the process and one to share a first draft of the Strategy; a day and a half long design charrette; multiple meetings of the project team including the public land owners; and a final public comment period. Outreach to encourage participation was extensive and included efforts of the public land owners to reach out to neighboring land owners; coordination with the Conservancy Board, Delta Stewardship Council, Delta Protection Commission, and all project partners to distribute workshop and charrette notices, and posting of notices on public boards (libraries, churches and retail shops) throughout the Delta. The design charrette had excellent participation with over 70 attendees representing public and private land owners, reclamation district engineers, county government, state and federal agencies, NGO's and academics. During the public comment period the Conservancy received three comment letters (Attachments 3, 4 and 5).

BACKGROUND

The Central Delta Corridor Partnership began meeting in early 2017 to conduct outreach to surrounding landowners and define the planning process. The partnership included The Nature Conservancy (TNC), The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD), the California Department of Water Resources (DWR), the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), the California Waterfowl Association (CWA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). Collectively, these organization own and manage approximately 50,000 acres of land in the Delta. These entities

share many common regional objectives including flood management, agriculture sustainability, and conservation of aquatic, avian and terrestrial resources. In recognition of their capital Delta investments, the historical legacy of the Delta, and the State's policies to rehabilitate the Delta ecosystem, these entities wanted to coordinate and assist in collaborative efforts with each other and with interested parties to implement actions that will achieve common goals and objectives. The entities believe that creation and enhancement of wildlife habitat can go hand-in-hand with levee improvements and maintenance, and sustainable agriculture to provide benefits not only to target species, but also for flood protection, water quality and local economic and social vitality. Specifically, this would be achieved by using public lands to develop ecologically significant habitat improvements while providing for Delta sustainability by addressing agriculture, subsidence, flood management, climate change, long-term land management, and water quality. These entities believe this to be in alignment with Delta community interests and consistent with their request to focus restoration efforts on public lands first.

The Delta Reform Act of 2009 established the Conservancy and includes four relevant mandates: (1) Protect and enhance habitat and habitat restoration, (2) Protect and preserve Delta agriculture and working landscapes; (3) Identify priority projects and initiatives for which funding is needed; and (4) Protect, conserve and restore the region's physical, agricultural, cultural, historical and living resources.

This project is consistent with the following objectives as outlined in the Delta Conservancy's 2017-2022 Strategic Plan, Goal 1, Delta Agriculture and Economic Enhancement.

- Objective 1: Work directly with local land owners, farmers, and others to analyze the state of Delta agriculture and identify priority agricultural investments and economic offset strategies for agricultural land conversions

Strategic Plan Goal 2, Delta Ecosystem Viability.

- Objective 1: Protect, restore or enhance habitat and improve water quality through implementation of grant funding projects
- Objective 3: Complete regional restoration strategies and priorities for the Cache Slough Complex and for additional region(s) in coordination with Delta stakeholders; collaborate with partners to implement high priority projects identified in regional plans

The need for regional planning in the Delta is called for in the Delta Plan, the current draft Delta Conservation Framework, has been articulated in the High Impact Science Action Agenda as approved by the Delta Plan Interagency Implementation Committee, and has been specifically called for in the Governor's Eco Restore Program.

Contact

Campbell Ingram, Executive Officer
Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta Conservancy
campbell.ingram@deltaconservancy.ca.gov
Phone: (916) 375-2089

